

Home Circle.

A WORD OF SYMPATHY.

Who can measure the good that may result from one loving, sympathetic word? Several years ago a minister was passing through a prison crowded with convicts, and beheld a pitiable sight. One gigantic fellow crouched alone in a corner, his feet chained to a ball. There was an unhealed wound on his face where he had been shot while trying to escape. The sight of the dumb, gaunt figure touched the visitor's sympathies.

"How long has he to serve?" he asked the keeper.

"For life."

"Has he anybody outside to look after him—wife or child?"

"How should I know? Nobody has ever noticed him all the time he has been here."

"May I speak to him?"

"Yes; but only for a minute."

The minister hesitated. What could he say in one minute? He touched the man's torn cheek. "I am sorry," he said. "I wish I could help you."

The convict looked keenly at him, the hard lines of his face softened, and he nodded to indicate that he believed in the sympathy expressed.

"I am going away, and shall never see you again, perhaps; but you have a Friend who will stay here with you."

The small, keen eyes were on him; the prisoner dragged himself up, waiting and eager.

"You have heard of Jesus?"

"Yes."

"He is your friend. If you are good, and true, and pray to God to help you, I am sure he will care for you."

"Come, sir," called the keeper; "time's up."

The clergyman turned sorrowfully away. The prisoner crawled after him, and catching his hand, held it in his own while he could. Tears were in the clergyman's eyes.

Fourteen years passed. The minister went one day into a mine, and among the workmen saw a gigantic figure, bent with hardship and age.

"Who is that?" he asked the keeper.

"A lifer, and a steady fellow—the best of the gang."

Just then the "lifer" looked up. His figure straightened; for he had recognized the clergyman. His eyes shone. "Do you know me?" he said. "Will he come soon? I've tried to be good."

At a single word of sympathy the life had been transformed—the convict redeemed.—*Ram's Horn.*

HOME FIRST.

"Let home stand first before all other things! No matter how high your ambition may transcend its duties, no matter how far your talents or your influence may reach beyond its doors, before everything else build up a true home! Be not its slave; be its minister! Let it not be enough that it is swept and garnished, that its silver is brilliant, that its food is delicious, but feed the love in it, feed the truth in it, feed thought and aspiration, feed all charity and gentleness in it. Then from its walls shall come forth the true woman and the true man, who shall together rule and bless the land." Is this an overwrought picture? We think not. What honor can be greater than to found such a home? What dignity higher than to reign its undisputed, honored mistress? What is the ability to speak from a public platform to large, intelligent audiences, or the wisdom that may command a seat on the judge's bench, compared to that which can insure and preside over a true home, that husband and children "rise and call her blessed?"

WHAT SOME THINGS HAVE COST.

The magnificent national capitol at Washington has cost since the laying of its corner stone in 1793, very nearly \$15,000,000; but the state capitol of New York at Albany, altho not yet completed according to the architect's designs, has already cost almost \$20,000,000, and is the most expensive building of modern times.

The largest and most expensive city hall in the United States is that of Philadelphia, and its principal tower is to contain the largest clock in the world.

The greatest price ever paid for a horse was \$150,000, given by Mr. Malcom Forbes, of Boston, for Arion, which he bought from Senator Stanford, of California. Axtell, the trotter, brought \$105,000 when three years old, while in 1891 Saint Blaise was sold for \$100,000.

Think of paying \$250,000 for a single meal! That is what a wealthy Roman once did, when he wished to impress a dozen guests with his disregard for riches.

The largest sum ever asked or offered for a diamond was \$2,150,000, which the prince of Hyderabad, in India, agreed to give the jeweler who then owned the imperial, which is considered the finest stone in the world.

One hundred and three thousand dollars has been offered and refused for a Hebrew Bible now in the library of Vatican at Rome. This makes it the most valuable book in the world, so far as dollars and cents go.

In 1635, when the entire Dutch nation was crazy upon the subject of tulips, a single bulb was sold for \$2,200. At such prices it would pay better to raise tulips than to own the most valuable gold mine in the world.

Speaking of gold mines, where do you suppose the most valuable bit of ore ever smelted in the world, so far as is known, was found? In California, or Australia, or India? No, indeed. It was a lot containing two hundred pounds of quartz holding gold at the rate of \$50,000 per ton, and was found in a mine at Ishpeming, Mich.

The shah of Persia and the sultan of Turkey each possess a prayer mat, or rug, made of diamonds and pearls, and valued at something over \$2,500,000 apiece. The largest and most expensive rug in the world, made of ordinary materials of which such things are manufactured, is owned by the Carlton Club, of London.

A broken wooden horse, with which Napoleon Bonaparte played when a child, was recently sold for 1,000 francs.

The most valuable of modern paintings is Meissonier's "1814," which was bought by a Frenchman for \$170,000. The same gentleman paid \$150,000 for "The Angelus," by Millet, of which you all have doubtless seen photographs or other reproductions.—*Harper's Round Table.*

START THINGS RIGHT.

Thelwall once said to Coleridge: "I think it is unfair to influence the minds of children by inculcating opinions before they shall come to years of discretion so they may choose for themselves." Coleridge made no reply, but asked his friend to visit his garden. When inside he said, "This is my botanical garden." "How can that be," asked Thelwall, "for it is all overgrown with weeds?" "Oh," said Coleridge, "that is only because my garden has not come to the age of discretion. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair to prejudice the soil in favor of roses, berries and delicious fruits."

You get nothing good out of a garden till you put something good in. There must be seed or there are sure to be weeds. Do not make a mistake. The Word of God must be planted in the heart if good results are to be attained. A precious harvest only comes from sowing precious seed, and caring for it after it is sown. For the fairest garden on earth, left to itself, will soon become a tangled mass of thorns and briars; and a heart unseeded and uncultivated brings forth thorns and briars, and is nigh unto cursing and its end is to be burned.—*The Christian.*